

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner and Supervisory Examiner Dickson for the courtesies extended to Applicant's Representatives in a personal interview on August 28, 2007. The substance of the interview is incorporated in these remarks.

Claims 6-7, 14-15, 17-18, 21-29, and 31-34 are pending further consideration. Claim 35 has been added. All previously presented claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Publication No. 10-7003 (JP '003). Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection in view of the amendments herein.

In accordance with the agreement reached at the interview, the independent claims have been amended more particularly to recite opposite side portions of the distance unit (Claim 6) or expanded portion (Claims 14 and 21) of the steering column. Specifically, independent Claim 6 has been amended to recite, inter alia, a steering column apparatus including a steering column formed with a reinforcement portion that couples opposite side portions of the distance unit. The reinforcement portion includes at

least one convex streak or concave streak that couples the opposite side portions. Independent Claim 14, as currently amended, recites, inter alia, a steering column apparatus including a steering column with an upper wall portion located between opposite side portions. Formed on the upper wall portion is a reinforcement portion that enhances clamping rigidity of the expanded portion and includes at least one convex band or concave band that couples the opposite side portions. Independent Claim 21 has been amended to recite, inter alia, a steering column apparatus including a steering column with an upper wall portion that is located between opposite side portions and arch-shaped in cross-section. Formed on the upper wall portion is a reinforcement portion that enhances clamping rigidity of the expanded portion and extends circumferentially of the upper wall portion.

JP '003 neither teaches nor suggests a steering column apparatus as currently recited in Applicant's claims. Note for example, that JP '003 fails to teach or suggest a steering column formed with a reinforcement portion having a convex or concave streak that couples opposite side portions of a distance unit as set forth in amended Claim 6. JP '003 further fails to teach or suggest a steering column with an upper wall portion located between opposite side portions,

the upper wall portion having formed thereon a reinforcement portion that enhances clamping rigidity of the expanded portion and includes at least one convex band or concave band that couples the opposite side portions as now set forth in Claim 14. Finally, note that JP '003 neither teaches nor suggests a steering column having an upper wall portion that is located between opposite side portions and arch-shaped in cross-section, where the upper wall portion is formed with a reinforcement portion that extends circumferentially of the wall portion as set forth in amended Claim 21.

Accordingly, Claims 6, 14, and 21, at least as currently amended, are patentable over JP '003.

Dependent Claims 23, 33, and 34 have been revised in view of the amendments to their respective base claims. The dependent claims are patentable for at least the reasons previously discussed with respect to their base claims.

Newly added Claim 35 depends from Claim 6 and is patentable over JP '003 for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 6. Note, for example, that Claim 35 recites, inter alia, a steering column having a reinforcement portion that couples opposite side portions of a distance unit in each of an upper part and a lower part of the opposite side portions. JP '003 neither teaches nor

suggests a steering column having this configuration.

In view of the amendments presented herein, all claims are believed to be clearly in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully urged that the outstanding rejections be withdrawn and that this application now be passed to issue.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10268) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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